

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 0416

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PEPR, LE
SUBJECT: THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE (ADF) IN LEBANON

1. DCM CALLED ON ADF COMMANDER COL. SAMI KHATIB ON JANUARY
23. DURING 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION, COL. KHATIB MADE THE
FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

2. FINANCING OF THE ADF. COL. KHATIB SAID THAT KUWAIT
OWED \$9 MILLION AND QATAR \$3 MILLION FOR THE FINANCING OF
THE ADF FORCES IN LEBANON PRIOR TO OCTOBER 28, 1977. HE SAID
THAT "NOT A PENNY" HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM ANY SOURCE FOR THE
FINANCING OF THE ADF SINCE THEN.

3. EXTENSION OF ADF MANDATE. COL. KHATIB SAID THAT HE
THOUGHT THE ADF WOULD BE NEEDED FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER SIX
MONTHS AFTER THE LATEST EXTENSION EXPIRES ON APRIL 28. IN
KHATIB'S VIEW, THERE IS NO NEED FOR EITHER AN ARAB
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LEAGUE MEETING OR UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT BY ARAB STATES IN
ORDER FOR THE ADF MANDATE TO BE EXTENDED; ALL THAT IS
REQUIRED IS FOR THE COUNTRIES NOW PROVIDING TROOPS TO
AGREE TO LET THEM STAY, AND FOR THE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE
PROMISED TO FINANCE THE ADF TO DO SO. HE SAID THAT HE
WAS PLANNING TO BEGIN REPLACING ADF UNITS WITH UNITS OF
THE LEBANESE ARMY (LAF) OR THE LEBANESE INTERNAL

SECURITY FORCES (ISF) DURING THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. (FIRST STEP IN THIS PROCESS HAS ALREADY OCCURRED WITH STATIONING OF AN LAF UNIT AT BAIN MILITAIRE IN BEIRUT AND DISMANTLING OF NEARBY ADF CHECKPOINT.) HOW FAST THIS PROCESS COULD MOVE, HE SAID, DEPENDED ON THREE FACTORS: A) THE ABILITY OF THE LAF AND ISF TO ASSUME SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES; B) PROGRESS TOWARDS POLITICAL RECONCILIATION IN LEBANON; AND C) "AREA DEVELOPMENTS." HE INTENDED TO MOVE SLOWLY, GOING AREA BY AREA SO HE WOULD ALWAYS KNOW EXACTLY WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SECURITY IN WHICH DISTRICT. AS THE SYRIAN ADF UNITS WERE REPLACED, THEY COULD BE SENT BACK TO SYRIA. HE HOPED TO REACH THE POINT WHERE THERE WOULD ONLY BE FIVE ADF CAMPS, ONE IN EACH REGION OF LEBANON, WHERE ADF FORCES WOULD BE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE BACK-UP SUPPORT TO LEBANESE FORCES IF NECESSARY.

3. COMPOSITION OF THE ADF. KHATIB SAID THAT DESPITE SUDANESE PRESIDENT NUMEIRY'S RECENT SPEECH, HE DID NOT REPEAT NOT EXPECT THE SUDANESE CONTINGENT OF THE ADF TO BE WITHDRAWN. HE SAID HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT WITH THE SUDANESE AMBASSADOR WHO TOLD HIM THAT NUMEIRY'S SPEECH HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO PUT PRESSURE ON THOSE COUNTRIES THAT HAD PROMISED TO FINANCE THE ADF AND HAD NOT DONE SO, AND THAT THE SUDANESE CONTINGENT WOULD NOT BE WITHDRAWN. KHATIB SAID IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS THAT THE SUDANESE, SAUDI AND UAE CONTINGENT (WHICH HE REFERRED TO AS A REINFORCED BATTALION), KHATIB SAID THAT THE GOL MAY BE ASKING FOR USG ASSISTANCE IN PERSUADING SAUDI GOVERNMENT TO LET THEM REMAIN AFTER THE PRESENT EXTENSION EXPIRES ON APRIL 28, BECAUSE THEY ARE PROVIDING PROTECTION TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY.

4. ADF-LEBANESE RELATIONS. IN RESPONSE TO DCM'S QUESTION (BASED ON RECENT REPORTS THAT THERE HAD BEEN A SERIOUS DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN UAE AND SYRIAN ADF CONTINGENTS IN THE BEQAA), KHATIB DENIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ANY SUCH DISPUTES. HE SAID THAT THE UAE, SUDANESE AND SAUDI CONTINGENTS WERE RESERVED AND PROFESSIONAL BUT THAT MANY OF THE SYRIAN TROOPS HAD BEEN IN LEBANON BEFORE AS WORKERS AND FELT MORE AT HOME. THIS LED TO ALL KINDS OF MINOR DISPUTES BETWEEN THE SYRIAN SOLDIERS AND THE LEBANESE POPULATION, WHICH HE WAS CONSTANTLY HAVING TO SORT OUT.

5. COMMENT: WE CONCUR WITH COL. KHATIB'S ESTIMATE THAT LEBANON FOR AT LEAST ANOTHER SIX MONTHS ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE THE LEBANESE ARMY CAN BEGIN TO CARRY SOME OF THE LOAD.

THE QUESTION OF IF AND HOW THE ADF MANDATE WILL BE RENEWED
AFTER THE CURRENT EXTENSION EXPIRES ON APRIL 28 WILL LOAN
INCREASINGLY LARGE AS THE DATE APPROACHES. WE WOULD
WELCOME COMMENTS OF ADDRESSEES ON ATTITUDES OF THEIR
HOST GOVERNMENTS. IN PARTICULAR, WE WOULD LIKE AN AUTHORITATIVE
STATEMENT FROM KHARTOUM ON SUDANESE PLANS FOR THEIR CONTINGENT.
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